

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BUENOS AIRES 7183

USEEC

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS ELAB, PINT, ICFTU, ILO, AR

SUBJECT FURTHER EFFORTS TO REALIGN THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT

REF: A BUENOS AIRES 3031; B BUENOS AIRES 4992

SUMMARY. IN THE NAME OF "UNITY", THERE IS A PARALLEL FORCE WHICH HAS BEEN GAINING GROUND IN RECENT WEEKS AMONG ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS AND EFFECTIVELY CHALLENGING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE COMMITTEES OF 5 AND 25 TO SPEAK IN REPRESENTATION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT DURING THE CURRENT SUSPENSION OF UNION LIBERTIES. COMMITTEE OF 5 MEMBERS MAINTAIN THEY ARE HOLDING THEIR OWN, AND THUS FAR THEIR ASSERTIONS APPEAR CORRECT. THE CLIMAX TO THE STRUGGLE MAY COME IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO. THE ARMY APPEARS TO HAVE ENCOURAGED THE PARALLEL GROUP IN A MOVE DESIGNED TO WEAKEN PERONISTS AND SUPPORTERS OF ADMIRAL MASSERA IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THE ORGANIZERS OF THE PARALLEL EFFORT SEEM TO BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT TO INHERIT THE TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WHEN TRADE
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UNION LIBERTIES ARE RESTORED, BUT SEE THEIR PERCEPTIONS AS ILLUSORY AND THE UNION "OPENING" AS STILL FAR OFF. MEANWHILE DISCONTENT SEEMS TO BE ON THE RISE AGAIN AMONG THE RANK AND FILE AS THE RECESSION GIVES WAY TO MORE FACTORY LAYOFFS AND THE INFLATIONARY SITUATION TOGETHER WITH DECREASED WORKER PURCHASING POWER CONTINUE UNABATED.
END SUMMARY.

1. REFTTEL A REPORTED THE CREATION LAST MARCH OF A TRADE UNION COALITION PRARALLE TO THE COMMITTEE OF 25 CALLED THE "COMISION DE GESTION Y TRABAJO" OR "CGT". THE REFTTEL ALSO MENTIONED THE SEPARATE EMERGENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT BLOC WHICH SEEMED AT THE TIME TO BE WORKING AS A PRESSURE GROUP WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 25. WHILE KEY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 25 WERE AWAY IN GENEVA ATTENDING THE ILO CONFERENCE IN JUNE, THESE ORGANIZATIONAL MOVES CAME INTO FOCUS MORE CLEARLY AS A JOINT EFFORT AIMED AT REALIGNING THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF UNION FORCES OPPOSED TO THE VERTICALIST LABOR CAUCUS WITHIN THE 25 STRUCTURE KNOWN AS THE "PERONIST UNION MOVEMENT" ("MOVIMIENTO SINDICAL PERONISTA"-- OR MSP).

2. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, THE MSP IS AN OUTGROWTH OF THE "VERTICALIST" AND "ORTHODOX/COMBATIVE" SUBFACTIONS OPERATING WITHIN THE COMMITTEE OF 25, ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS THE "COMMITTEE OF 9". EMBASSY HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED THE COMPOSITION OF THE MSP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHICH IS CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:

TRADE UNION SECRETARIES: RICARDO PEREZ (TRUCK DRIVERS) AND ALFONSO MILLAN (GLASS EMPLOYEES).
INTERIOR SECRETARIES: ALBERTO CAMPOS (METAL WORKERS) AND FNU D' ANGELO (CONSTRUCTION WORKERS).
PRESS SECRETARIES: MIGUEL GAZZERA (SPAGHETTI WORKERS)
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AND DELMIDIO MORET (LUZ Y FUERZE).
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: ROBERTO GARCIA (TAXIS) AND JOSE RODRIGUEZ (AUTO WORKERS).
SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: SANTIAGO SERPA (SANITATION WORKERS) AND ANTONIO MARCHESE (SHOE WORKERS).
POLITICAL DOCTRINE: ROBERTO DIGON (TOBACCO EMPLOYEES AND JUAN CRESPI (STATE PETROLEUM WORKERS).
FINANCE SECRETARIES: CARLOS CABRERA (MINERS) AND JOSE LUIS CASTILLO (RIVER BOAT MECHANICS).
YOUTH SECRETARY: CESAR LOZA (PORT WORKERS).

3. DURING THE ILO INTERLUDE THE CGT WAS JOINED BY A NEWLY FORMED CONSTELLATION OF INDEPENDENTS, INDEPENDENT PERONISTS AND DISSIDENTS FROM THE VERTICALIST SECTOR OF THE 25 IN WHAT WAS SELF BILLED AS A "UNITY DRIVE," IE, AS THE LAST GREAT REORGANIZATION NECESSARY PREPARATORY TO WHAT HOPEFULLY WOULD LEAD TO A SERIOUS GOVERNMENT MOVE TO RESTORE TRADE UNION LIBERTIES. THE RECENT VISIT OF ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD SERVED TO SPUR THIS REALIGNMENT PROCESS AND, AS A RESULT, THE NEW COALITION MAY BE CONSTITUTED FORMALLY WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS UNDER THE TITLE OF "COMISION NACIONAL DE TRABAJO" OR

CNT.

4. THE BASIC ELEMENTS CONSTITUTING THE NEW GROUPING REPORTEDLY INCLUDE (FROM THE CGT) LUIS GUERRERO OF THE METAL WORKERS, DELFOR GIMENEZ OF THE TEXTILE WORKERS, JORGE TRIACCA OF THE PALASTICS UNION, THE FEDERAL CAPITAL WORKERS OF THE COMMERCIAL EMPLOYEES (WITH GRAY EMINENCE ARMANDO CAVALIERI PLAYING A BEHINE THE SCENES ROLE), SECONDARY LEVEL LUZ Y FUERZA LEADERS FROM THE FERDERALL CAPITAL AND THE PROVINCES AND HEALTH WORKER LEADER OTTO CALACE; AND (FROM THE SO CALLED "INDEPENDENT" OR "DISSIDENT" SECTOR) MANUEL DIZ REY OF THE TRAVELLING SALESMEN, ESTEBAN ROLANDO, EX HEAD OF THE UNION FERROVIARIS, LUIS ETCHEZAR OF LA FRATERNIDAD, LUIS VENTURINI OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NAVAL ELECTRICIANS, RENE PABLE AZAR OF THE TRAMWAY WORKERS, ALBERTO SERRANO OF THE TIREWORKERS (WHO READY THE WORKER DELEGATION SPEECH AT THE ILO CONFERENCE), JUAN HORVATH OF THE STATE WORKERS, AND RAMON VALLE OF THE INSURANCE WORKERS.

5. THE CNT THUS GROUPS TOGETHER LEADERS OF SMALL

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NON INTERVENED UNIONS WITH A FEW LEADERS FROM SOME OF THE LARGEST INTERVENED INDUSTRIAL UNIONS IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE NEW "UNITY EFFORT" WAS ENCOURAGED TO SOME DEGREE BY ARMY OFFICERS UNDER THE ORDERS OF COMMANDER IN CHIEF GENERAL VIOLA. THE LEADERS OF THE INTERVENED UNIONS INVOLVED IN THE REORGANIZATIONAL MOVEMENT EVIDENTLY HAVE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL BE GIVEN THE BLESSING TO FORM TRADE UNION COMMISSIONS WHICH GRADUALLY WILL TAKE OVER CONTROL OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR UNIONS FROM THE MILITARY INTERVENTORS. SUCH COMMISSIONS ALREADY EXIST IN EMBRYO FORM IN MOST OF THE INTERVENED UNIONS WHERE THEY ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY TO THE MILITARY INTERVENTORS. CNT LEADERS PRESUMABLY BELIEVE THEY HAVE STRUCK A DEAL WITH THE ARMY WHICH WILL ASSURE A CONTINUATION OF THEIR HEREMONY WHENEVER TRADE UNION LIBERTIES ARE RESTORED AND REORGANIZING ELECTIONS ARE CALLED.

6. IT IS APPARENT THAT ALTHOUGH THE CNT EFFORT IS BILLED AS A UNITY MOVEMENT, THE TWO BLOCS --THE 25 OR WHAT IS LEFT OF IT ON ONE SIDE AND THE CNT ON THE OTHER-- ARE PARALLEL
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ORGANIZATIONS WHICH CUT ACROSS THE LABOR MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE, OR AT LEAST CONSOLIDATE DIVISIONS ALREADY EXISTING IN THE MOVEMENT. THUS, JUAN TACONE AND MORET OF LUZ Y FUERZA ARE IN THE 25 CAMP, WHEREAS OSCAR LEZCANO AND OTHERS ARE IN THE CNT; EX-RAILWAY UNION PRESIDENT ROLANDO IS IN THE CNT WHEREAS FORMER BOARD COLLEAGUE RAUL RAVITTI BACKS THE MSP AND THE 25; RAILWAY ENGINEER ETCHEZAR'S SUPPORT OF THE CNT HAS BEEN CHALLENGED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS BOARD; AND THERE ARE SIMILAR DIVISIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, PETROLEUM WORKERS AND OTHER UNIONS AS WELL. IT ALSO SEEMS THAT THE TWO PARALLEL BLOCS CUT ACROSS PREVIOUSLY EXISTING POLITICAL LINES IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT SUCH AS THE "VERTICALISTS" AND "PARTICIPATIONISTS". WHILE SOME OF THE CLOSEST ASSOCIATES OF THE AFL-CIO, THE ICFTU AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS REMAIN IN THE 25 CAMP, THERE ARE SOME ITS MEMBERS IN THE NEW BLOC. (CURIOUSLY, TWO CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE CNT, THE HEALTH WORKERS AND THE INSURANCE WORKERS-- UNIONS WHICH HAVE RESISTED INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION IN THE PAST-- HAVE MADE A PLAY IN RECENT WEEKS TO JOIN FIET).

7. LIKEWISE IT IS EVIDENT, AS A PERUSAL OF THE CNT MEMBERSHIP LISTED IN PARA 4 ABOVE AGAINST THE ORIGINAL LIST OF 25 MEMBERS (SEE PARA 2, REFTEL A.) WILL SHOW, THAT A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THE CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE 25 HAVE DESERTED TO THE NEW COALITION. HOWEVER,

THERE ARE STILL A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF UNIONS WHICH DO NOT HAVE SEATS ON THE 25 MAN BOARD BUT WHICH CONTINUE TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES REPRESENTED THROUGH THAT BOARD. AS SUGGESTED IN THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH, MANY OF THE UNIONS ARE SPLIT--PARTICULARLY THE INTERVENED UNIONS-- AND A TRUE TEST OF RELATIVE STRENGTH COULD ONLY COME WITH UNION ELECTIONS. THE 25 GROUP MAINTAINS THE ADVANTAGE
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THAT THE DOMINANT FACTION IN THE KEY METAL WORKERS UNION--THAT FACTION SUPPORTING EX LABOR LORENZO MIGUEL--FORMS THE VERTICALIST BACKBONE OF THE MSP AND THE COMMITTEE OF 25.

8. FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 25'S 5-MAN EXECUTIVE BOARD SO FAR HAVE BEEN HOLDING OUT AGAINST FUSION TALKS ON ANY BASIS OTHER THAN TERMS LAID DOWN BY THE 25, IE, ON THE BASIS THAT THE CHALLENGERS JOIN AN EXPANDED 25 ORGANIZATION AND NOT VICE VERSAM MSP REPRESENTATIVES GARCIA AND CABRERA ON THE COMMITTEE OF 5 HAVE REFUSED TO CONSIDER CNT DEMANDS TO UNIFY THE MOVEMENT ON THE CNT'S TERMS, IE, AT THE EXPENSE OF DISSOLVING THE 25. A KEY ELEMENT IN THEIR SOLIDITY THUS FAR HAS BEEN UNEXPECZED SUPPORT WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM PAPER WORKER LEADER FERNANDO DONAIRES AND THE "EX-GROUP OF 8" SECTOR WHICH HE REPRESENTS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GARMENT WORKER LEADER (" PARTICIPATIONIST")/ENIRQUE MICO HAS TAKEN THE SAME POSTURE. OF THE 5-MAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, "INDEPENTENT" POSTAL WORKER LEADER BALDASSINI IS CURRENTLY THE ONLY FIGURE WHO SEEMS TO BE VACILLATING WITH ONE FOOT IN EACH CAMP. MUCH FANFARE HAS BEEN PAID IN THE PRESS TO BALDASSINI'S EVENTUAL DECISION. IF HE LEAVES THE 5 AND THE 25, THIS UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE A HEAVY BLOW. HOWEVER, DONAIRES TELLS US HE BELIEVES THE 25 WILL HOLD TOGETHER AND THAT THE WORST IS OVER IN TERMS OF THE CHALLENGE POSED BY THE CNT.

9. COMMENT: A NUMBER OF TENTATIVE COMMENTS ARE CALLED FOR AT THIS POINT:

A. IT DOES SEEM THAT THE ARMY MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED THE CNT'S FORMATION BECAUSE IT VIEWS THE MSP AS THE CADRE OF A PERONIST POLITICAL OPPOSITION CAUCUS TOO CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE POLITICALLY AMBITIONS OF SOON TO BE RETIRED JUNTA MEMBER ADMIRAL MASSERA. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT FAIR TO SAY THAT THERE IS A CLEAN ARMY/NAVY CLEAVAGE
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BETWEEN THE CNT AND THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE 25, IE,
NOT ALL OF THOSE IN THE CNT ENTERPRISE ARE ARMY MEN AND
NOT ALL OF THOSE REMAINING LOYAL TO THE 25 ARE MASSERA
SUPPORTERS.

B. WHILE SOME CNT LEADERS APPEAR COCKSURE ABOUT THE
THE MILITARY'S EVENTUALLY TURNING CONTROL OF THEIR
INTERVENED UNIONS TO THEM, THE ARMY HAS NOT KEPT SUPPOSED
POLITICAL COMMITMENT MADE TO UNION LEADERS IN THE PAST.
INDEED SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE ARMY'S INTENT IS TO
USE THESE LEADERS TO WEAKEN THE HARD CORE PERONIST
OPPOSITION AND THEN DROP THEM IN FAVOR OF A NEW GENERATION
OF LEADERS WHO HAVE NO MARKS AGAINST THEM AND WHO PRESUMABLY
WILL BE MORE COMPATIBLE WITH A FREE MARKET ECONOMY AND
"RIGHT TO WORK" RULES.

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C. THE SITUATION SEEMS FLUID BETWEEN THE TWO
UNION CAMPS. DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE ALMOST AMIABLY
BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS. NEITHER SIDE CALLES THE OTHER
"TRATORS". TODAY'S PAPERS SUMMARIZE THE CURRENT STATE
OF PLAY AS FOLLOWS: THE CNT REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN POST-
PONING THE FORMAL CONSTITUTION OF ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AWAITING THE RESULTS OF ITS APPEAL TO THE MEMBER OF
THE 25 TO JOIN IT IN ITS UNITY EFFORT.

10. ONE SIDE RESULT OF THE PARALLEL STRUGGLE HAS
BEEN THE COMPETITIVE ISSUANCE OF COMMUNIQUE IN WHICH

EACH SIDE TRIES TO OUTDO THE OTHER IN TERMS OF ATTACKING
THE WAGE AND ECONOMIC POLICIES OF ECONOMY MINISTER
MARTINEZ DE HOZ. THE COMMUNIQUE WAR TAKES PLACE AGAINST
A BACKDROP OF A NEW RESURGENCE OF DISCONTENT AMONG WORKINGMENT
FOLLOWING THE DECISION TO CLOSE THE GM PLANT LAST MONTH,
OTHER FACTORY LAYOFFS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE CONTINUING
INDUSTRIAL RECESSION AND NO SIGN OF SIGNIFICANT ABATEMENT
IN THE INFLATIONARY SPIRAL AND THE ACCOMPANYING DECREASE
IN REAL WAGES. END COMMENT
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